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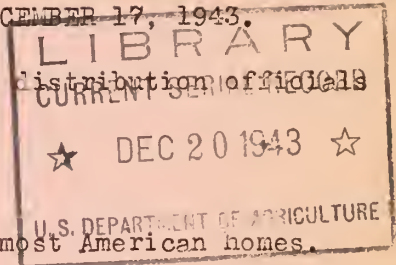
homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1943.

Subject: "PLANNING CHRISTMAS DINNER." Information from food distribution officials
of U. S. Department of Agriculture;



This year, Christmas dinner won't be quite the same in most American homes.

Many of our men and women will be in camps or at the battlefronts, or on ships at sea. Familiar faces may be missing from your own table as you sit down to the holiday dinner... and perhaps new faces will be there-- men and women in uniform, far from their own homes, whom you've asked to share your Christmas with you.

But the dinner you serve will be familiar in spite of the war -- it will differ only a little from the traditional Yuletide feast. The few scarcities only remind us we're still eating better than any other country.

By now, no doubt, you've started planning your Christmas dinner so let's talk about some of the ~~traditional~~ holiday foods. Let's hear what the food distribution people of the U.S. Department of Agriculture say about the likelihood of finding the usual holiday foods in the market.

Of course local conditions differ all over the country, but they say on the whole, you'll probably find more turkeys than you saw at Thanksgiving time. Turkey growers didn't sell as much of their crop Thanksgiving as was expected, so that leaves even more gobblers for our Christmas dinners.

If you'd rather have a smaller bird than a turkey, you'll probably have no trouble getting a nice roasting chicken, as poultrymen will have a great many roasters ready for the Christmas market. If goose or duck is your usual choice for the holiday, most likely you'll find the supply pretty much the same as last year.

In many homes, the ~~traditional~~ main dish for Christmas dinner is a savory pork roast, and this month your market will probably have a good deal of pork. And what's more, ration values on fresh pork are down two points since last month.

Whatever meat you serve-- pork, turkey, chicken, duck, or goose-- you probably plan to use sage and thyme (pronounced time) to season it. Both sage and thyme are scarce, this year, but most grinders are making a good mixed seasoning containing sage, thyme, marjoram, and black pepper.

For many families, boiled onions are a tradional part of Christmas dinner. Well, military demands and heavy civilian buying, have made onions a rare sight in the stores. So you'll be fortunate if you find enough onions to season the stuffing, let alone getting enough onions to serve as a vegetable. But if that seems like a hardship, remember that some boy somewhere may get soup for his Christmas dinner-- soup from a field kitchen, made of dehydrated soup mix, and eaten during a lull of battle. The onions that make his soup hearty and appetizing may be the very ones you didn't get for Christmas dinner.

White potatoes will be plentiful for the holiday and you can buy sweet potatoes, too, if you prefer those.

You can't buy much canned cranberry sauce this year, but you'll find quite a few cranberries you can cook at home. Now that oranges are plentiful again, you may wish to make a raw cranberry relish, using a pound of raw cranberries and one orange. Wash the orange and cut it into quarters... take out the seeds... then grind the orange rind and all, with the cranberries. Use the fine knife in your food chopper. After you've ground the berries and the orange, add a cup of sugar or strained honey, and a quarter teaspoon of salt. You can make this relish now, and keep it in a cold place until Christmas. By using the cranberries raw, you get the most out of the good supply of vitamin C they contain.. This vitamin dwindles when you cook the berries into sauce... and it gets even lower when you strain the sauce for jelly.

And now we come to the question of dessert for Christmas dinner. If hot mince pie is your favorite, you'll be glad to know there's eighty to eighty-five percent of a normal supply of canned mincemeat. Of course production of mincemeat is somewhat restricted because of the sugar, raisins, currants, and other scarce ingredients it needs. The War Food Administration recently increased the amounts of raisins and prunes for civilian use-- good news if you're making your own mincemeat, or if you're having plum pudding to finish off your dinner.

Even with a few shortages, American families will sit down next week to Christmas dinners that would seem fabulous to the hungry people of Europe and Asia. It's something to think about when you're doing your holiday shopping-- when you're cooking and eating Christmas dinner-- and when you're using up the leftovers, so that no morsel of food goes to waste. Our small inconveniences in the way of food shortages are only a minor contribution toward bringing the time closer when people everywhere can sit down to Christmas dinner in a world of peace and plenty.

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